

GULF DEFENDER

WING MISSION: TRAIN THE WORLD'S BEST AIR SUPERIORITY TEAM FOR THE AIR FORCE
WING VISION: TEAM TYNDALL - TAKING AMERICA'S PREMIER AIR SUPERIORITY TRAINING INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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Sept. 21, 2001



2nd Lt. Serena Custis

ID please...

A customer has his identification card checked prior to entering the base support building Tuesday. Troops are reminded to be patient as heightened security measures continue to cause extra waiting time at gates and building entrances.

Tyndall resumes operations

COURTESY OF 325TH FIGHTER WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In response to recent events, Tyndall Air Force Base remains at an increased security posture as such only individuals possessing a military identification card will be permitted to access the base without an escort. The commander has made this decision to ensure personnel and facilities are as secure as possible.

Tyndall Air Force Base has resumed flying and training operations. Flying schedules will be balanced with the required force protec-

tion measures being taken on base.

Most Services facilities are open. The Tyndall Commissary, Base Exchange, the base clinic and base support sections are back to normal operating hours. If you know the telephone number, please call the agency to verify the operating hours before proceeding to the base.

"Tyndall is united with the President and the community in ensuring America remains strong and free," said Col. William Bledsoe, 325th Fighter Wing vice commander. "We appreciate the tremendous support and patience of Team Tyndall and the community during this trying time."

In Brief

Gate security, closures

Officers will no longer be saluted at the gates while under FPCON Charlie or FPCON Delta. Sabre Gate will be closed from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. until further notice.

Postal center hours

The postal service center hours of operation are from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Saturday until further notice. Window hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Commercial deliveries

Commercial deliveries must be limited to mission essential only. All delivery vehicles must enter through the Cleveland Gate and be escorted at all times.

POW/MIA Day activities

The POW/MIA luncheon is cancelled for Sept. 21. The Memorial and Retreat Ceremonies are still scheduled to take place. See Channel 12 or call Senior Master Sgt. Mohr at 283-2360 for more information.

News Herald

Home delivery of the Panama City News Herald has not been possible since Tyndall went to heightened security. Currently the News Herald is holding past papers until they are able to resume delivery. Customers who don't wish for their papers to be held can contact the News Herald and have their subscription suspended until the base reopens for delivery. They will be credited for the time they do not receive the paper. If customers don't call, their papers will automatically be held. For more information, call 747-5050.

Take time to reflect, to value life

SENIOR AIRMAN RUSSELL CROWE

325TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

I'm one of those people that always seem to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sept. 11 wasn't any different.

I saw the terrorist attacks on the United States from Ft. Meade, Md., just a stone's throw away from the Pentagon. It was the last day of a month-long course. I was graduating that morning and flying out on a Boeing 747 around lunch. I had my tickets in hand, ready to return home.

I saw news of the first plane crash on the World Wide Web and I immediately began to worry about my flight home – not the hundreds, possibly thousands of people who had lost their lives. Then I felt a deep, sickness envelop me. I realized that I was being selfish and callous. The embarrassment still haunts me.

I watched as the second plane hit the South Tower of the World Trade Center – our worst fears were confirmed: it was no accident.

Then news of the Pentagon attack came blaring across the screen. Were friends and fellow servicemembers okay? Outside the window near my desk, smoke billowed over the tree line from the burning concrete and office supplies that only minutes before were a symbol of the mightiest military in the world.

Disbelief and confusion turned to anger and suddenly fear, as it dawned on my classmates and me that Ft. Meade, home of the National Security Agency, might very well be the next target.

I felt like my stomach was a taut rubber band that had just been plucked. I stood staring into space, unable to fathom the scope of death and fear left in the wake of the attacks. I hoped and prayed that it was over. I thought about families and friends that were desperately making phone calls, paging relatives or trying to reach the disaster zones.

Like so many Americans, I sat glued to my television over the next few days, horrified about what was to come for the families lined up on street corners, the soldiers ready to fight and the firefighters digging through the wreckage.

I finally boarded a Delta flight at Baltimore Washington International Airport Friday night, and low-and-behold, it was nearly empty. Even after loading all the passengers that had previous flights cancelled, I was all alone, two empty seats next to me.

As the red, white and blue tail of the Delta jet lifted from the ground, I stared at the emptiness of those two seats. The plane was engulfed by an eerie silence and all I could think about were those seats. Then I found an inner peace. Not because I had gotten over the first-flight jitters, or because I had proven I wasn't going to let a terrorist attack change me. I accepted that it had changed me, and I'll never be the same.

Life is fragile. I had forgotten, and honestly, taken it for granted. No one in the Pentagon or World Trade Center realized Sept. 11 would be the last day of his or her life. I doubt they took an extra moment to tell their wives, husbands or children how much they loved them. It was just another day. But in an instant they were gone. I bet if they had it to do over again they would change everything.

But they can't. They're not here. I'm willing to bet if they could talk to us, they would ask us to appreciate life to its fullest, to treat everyday as if it's our last, to take time and be thankful for everything we have. In doing this, they will live on. We can carry the torch of remembrance by not forgetting that life is precious, sweet, and often times, too short.

As we ascended toward the heavens in an eagle of steel, under starlight on a dark fall-like night, I came to a realization: I knew that my view had been backwards. This time I was in the right place at right time.



2nd Lt. Serena Custis

Good dog

Staff Sgt. Damian Phillips, 325th Security Forces Squadron, and Loeke, a bomb-detection dog, inspect a vehicle at the Cleveland gate.

In Brief

Vehicle escort procedures

When a delivery vehicle arrives at Cleveland gate, security forces will contact the sponsoring agency.

If there are multiple vehicles involved in a delivery, escorts are required to provide an escort in front of and behind the last vehicle in the convoy.

If multiple stops are being made by a single vehicle which will require different escorts for each delivery point, a positive handoff of escorts is to be made, never leaving a delivery truck unescorted at any time. Telling a driver he can meet the next escort at a certain location is not escorting.

Delivery vehicles will not be allowed or directed to drive around the in-place barriers to make their deliveries.

The strength of America lies in diversity, pride

THOMAS E. CHATMAN

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In the aftermath of the American tragedy, we as a diverse people of the United States must join together in mourning and reflection. It is also clear that there is a potential for backlash against people of Middle Eastern descent. As our nation recovers from the terrible events of Sept. 11, 2001, the ability to stand united in the face of adversity must remain our nation's great-

est strength.

Fighting unlawful and irrational discrimination is our job, it is the American Peoples Work. We sometimes forget that the American family consists of many diverse individuals representing many different countries, religions, ethnicities, as well as points of view. As good steadfast Americans we must fight Racism against Muslims and persons of Middle Eastern decent, both inside and outside our fences.

Spreading divisive messages of intolerance is

wrong, and America can ill-afford any further loss of unity as we come together to heal our great nation. Much will remain uncertain in the coming days, but one thing will remain constant, America will mourn her dead, tend to her living and take care of the business of holding those responsible for the carnage, accountable. As Americans we must become a unified body in unconditional support of the President. Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh faiths must become one and comfort a grief-stricken nation. We do not live in America, America lives in us.